

Comprehensive School Improvement Plan (CSIP) Technical Assistance Part III Q&A January 2004

The following information reflects questions submitted from schools and area education agencies, as well as additional clarifications. Each month the CSIP technical assistance package will include questions and answers. This month's content includes the following categories:

- Constant Conversation Question #2: What do/will we do to meet student learning needs?—Goal Writing
- CSIP Linkage: Teacher Quality District Career Development Plan
- LEA Procedural Issues and Requirements

Constant Conversation Question #2: What do/will we do to meet student learning needs? Goal Writing

44. How is a “student learning goal” different from a “long-range goal”?

Answer: Student learning goals tend to be broader statements of expectations for all graduates—these goals are more general in scope (e.g., good citizens and societal contributors). Long-range goals are more targeted expectations in a particular priority area—students make progress with these goals over time (e.g., achievement at high levels in reading).

45. What are the criteria for helping us write our long-range goals?

Answer: The following guidance comes from the CSIP Rule/Statute Interpretation Matrix (pages 4 and 5):

- Long-range improvement goals may or may not contain a percentage increase.
- A long range-goal may contain more than one content area.
- Long-range goals may be based upon a specific sub-group, not necessarily based on an entire population.
- Long-range improvement goals must be based on increasing student achievement, not maintaining it.
- The long-range goal might not contain the words "reading," "math," or "science," but the goal must contain language that leads to the improvement of achievement in those areas (e.g., a literacy goal).
- Long-range goals may address areas in addition to reading, math, and science. These additional areas are locally determined.
- The long-range goal should be aligned with needs assessment data.

46. Is there a requirement for the number of long-range goals that must be written in the CSIP?

Answer: No, the number of goals written is a local decision; however, consider keeping long-range goals few in number. The CSIP Rule/Statute Interpretation Matrix lists the required goal areas for state requirements and federal program (funding) requirements.

47. Why would a district want to set goals for reading and mathematics based on anything other than AYP requirements?

Answer: Districts may have additional goals for reading and mathematics that are locally determined and focus on specific areas for all students, not just a targeted population. These goals may go beyond the AYP requirements for the district.

48. Do schools and school districts have to write specific, separate goals to address multi-cultural, gender fair (MCGF) approaches to the educational program?

Answer: No, schools and school districts can incorporate goals related to specific populations (e.g., at-risk, gifted/talented, ELL, gender, socio-economic status, and race) within their long-range goals for all students. In Westlake's thinking process, the district developed long-range goals to support state and federal

requirements, which include indicator data for subgroups. Westlake consolidates funding and actions from multiple programs and initiatives to meet student prioritized needs. These multiple program efforts are aligned with the same needs; as a result, multiple state and federal requirements for program expectations are met within the same goals.

49. Our district needs to access Title II, Part D Enhancing Education through Technology funds, but the district does not have baseline data for technology usage. Can we still access the funds/

Answer: Yes, because technology must be used to improve student achievement, and your district already has trend line data and long-range improvement goals in academic areas.

The Westlake teaching document has a technology usage goal that includes as one of its indicators the district's baseline/trend data in reading, mathematics, and science. Technology usage is not for its own sake but focused on improving academic achievement. Westlake will be collecting data for its second indicator (8th grade technology proficiency) in the future.

**District Career Development Plan Embedded in the CSIP
Public School Districts Only**

50. How does the Iowa Professional Model relate to the CSIP?

Answer: The Iowa Professional Development Model is guidance to support the required district career development plan, which is embedded in the CSIP.

51. Does state law require use of the Iowa Professional Development Model?

Answer: No, however the district career development plan is required pursuant to Iowa Code 284.6 and 281—IAC 83.6 (Teacher Quality rules scheduled for adoption February 2004). The Iowa Professional Development Model provides a recommended framework for developing a district career development plan; however, a school district may use another model as long as it has all the required elements of the district career development plan.

52. How does the district career development plan fit in with the CSIP?

Answer: The district career development plan is embedded within the CSIP. The requirements of the district career development plan align with the four CSIP Constant Conversation Questions. Implementing the district career development plan is the primary method to build teacher capacity to support meeting district academic goals.

Note: The Iowa Professional Development Model is structured to help local districts design and deliver the required district career development plan (which is embedded in the CSIP).

53. Does all professional development have to be “scientifically” researched based?

Answer: No. Within the district career development plan (which is embedded in the CSIP), professional development practices/strategies that have a documented scientific research base must be identified, at a minimum, somewhere within the K-12 system. However, districts are expected to work toward implementing research-based practices at all levels.

54. How is a district supposed to document “scientifically” based research in its CSIP?

Answer: See page 7 in the Westlake teaching document for CSIP Constant Conversation Question #2: What do/will we do to meet student learning needs? Westlake lists the federal criteria it uses to determine if a program/strategy has a quality research base.

Note: A district is accountable to ensure that all professional development provided through its district career development plan is research-based. The Department recognizes that districts may not be able to fully determine the research base of their professional development content by the fall of 2004; however, it is expected that in the future professional development delivered through the district career development plan will be research-base at all levels.

55. What sources are acceptable for verifying that a program or strategy has a research base?

Answer: The content area networks provide an example of one way to verify a research base.

56. Does every professional development offering have to be part of the district career development plan?

Answer: No. The district career development plan specifically targets professional development that builds teacher capacity designed to improve student achievement in reading, mathematics, and/or science.

Please note this distinction: The district offers other kinds of training that do not meet the components and the purpose of the district career development plan. This “other” training will not appear in the district career development plan. Examples appear below:

- Training on topics other than curriculum/instruction (e.g., how to facilitate meetings or how to score writing samples)
- Mandated training (e.g., blood borne pathogens and asbestos)

57. Does the content of the district career development plan have to include all K-12 staff?

Answer: No, a district must include all K-12 staff responsible for instruction.

58. Are all K-12 teachers expected to fully participate in the same professional development activities in the same way?

Answer: No. All professional development that is related to the district career development plan must be anchored to district goals, but situations may exist when building data indicate a variation in content. For example, the district might have a reading goal for the whole district. At the secondary level, teachers may work on analysis and generalization, and the elementary level may work on inferences and interpretation. These decisions are based upon data.

Note: This includes all licensed staff responsible for instruction.

59. Does the professional development that is related to the district career development plan apply to all high school staff responsible for instruction?

Answer: Yes. Instructional strategies are applied across content areas.

60. Are teachers responsible for “special areas” (e.g., physical education, art, and music) required to participate in professional development that is related to the district career development plan?

Answer: In most cases, teachers in specialized areas can implement the instructional strategies in the district career development plan into their content. It is possible, however, that a specialized teacher may be involved in professional development orientations but not involved in every aspect of the full training in the district career development plan. In those cases, the specialized teacher will focus on other goals in his/her individualized teacher career development plan. Whether a specialized teacher can implement instructional strategies (related to the district career development plan) into his/her content is locally determined.

61. Can the focus of the district career development plan be only within a specific grade span or at a specific grade level?

Answer: No, but the district can have content variations across grade spans. For example, a district could have different content at the elementary, middle, and high school as a result of data-based, documented needs. A district may not limit its district career development plan to grades K-6, for example.

62. Do the required components of the district career development plan apply to all instructional staff K-12? *These are the components: Based on student data and other needs assessment; aligned with district student achievement goals, focused on instruction, curriculum, and assessment; research-based practices aligned with Iowa Teaching Standards; and theory, demonstration, practice, observation, collaboration, and evaluation (formative and summative).*

Answer: Yes. However, a district plan could provide a schedule that has each building or grade span planning and implementing the components of the model at different rates. For example, in year one, the elementary building may have completed the data collection, goal setting, and design phases and be heavily involved in providing training and engaging in collaborative work. The high school, however, is studying data and working on selecting content. These differentiated schedules would be indicated in the CSIP.

63. Does the district career development plan have to address reading, mathematics, and science all in a given year?

Answer: No. The district needs to prioritize based upon data. The district is not required to have a district career development focus for each goal area. The district may support other actions for a goal (e.g., curriculum and assessment development, scheduling, and textbook adoption) other than the professional development in the district career development plan. The district may decide to adopt new goal areas over time but should not have more than one or two focus areas in professional development.

64. To what extent must a teacher's individual professional development plan align with the District Career Development Plan?

Answer: At a minimum, the goals for an individual teacher career development plan must be based upon the relevant Iowa Teaching Standards that support the long-range goals identified in the district's CSIP and any building-level goals for improved student achievement. Since the district career development plan is focused on district long-range goals to improve student learning, ideally the goal for individual teacher career development plans and the goal for the district career development plan will be closely aligned. The process described in the Iowa Model for Professional Development may be used simultaneously to implement both.

The individual teacher career development plans of faculty members in a building (or multiple buildings) would look similar because of collaborative work being undertaken to study the same instructional content, but might also reflect individual teacher needs. For example, a fourth grade teacher whose school is engaging in the study and implementation of a new math curriculum would likely have an individual plan to study and learn the new math curriculum. Should he/she be identified during the evaluation process as in need of additional skills in classroom management, however, that teacher's individual teacher career development plan would include staff development to address this specific need in addition to the learning of the new math curriculum.

65. Does the individual career development plan of a 4th grade art teacher, for example, have to contain an individual goal aligned with the "study and implementation of a new math curriculum?"

Note: See question and answer #59.

Answer: Yes, unless the school has determined that the art teacher cannot implement any of the instructional content (either general instructional strategies or mathematics content specific strategies) in the art classroom.

66. Will whole-grade-sharing districts have identical district career development plans in their CSIPs?

Answer: No. The CSIP will contain a district career development plan that is aligned with each district's goals and building needs. Each whole-grade-sharing district will study, implement, and monitor instructional strategies particular to its content and general instructional needs. It is possible, however, that whole-grade-sharing districts might share professional development providers, training, etc., that they might have in common.

67. Should we list all strategies and professional development plans for the up coming five plus years or are we going to list areas of focus for research-based strategies that will be addressed to improve student achievement?

Answer: You should include areas of professional development focus aligned with the long-range CSIP goals in addition to specific instructional strategies, at a minimum, to be implemented during the 2004-05 school year. The decision about how long to work on a strategy is determined by formative and summative evaluation data. The new web-based CSIP process will provide an annual window of opportunity to update needs data, actions to meet student needs, and programs/services evaluation. Greater levels of detail at the district, building, and classroom levels should be kept locally.

68. Does the specific content for professional development need to be included as a part of the district Career Development Plan?

Answer: Yes, a school district should describe the specific content on which it will focus to improve student achievement.

69. How will/should "other" areas of professional development be worked into the CSIP (e.g., there is a requirement regarding professional development for career and technical education teachers and preparing all staff to work with diverse learners)?

Answer: Districts are required to submit professional development strategies related to their academic priorities. Strategies in the district career development plan will help teachers address the needs of all learners. Implementation of professional development strategies is intended to improve the achievement of all students, including diverse learners and students who participate in career and technical programs. If a teacher needs specific skill/content training, those needs can be addressed in individual staff professional development plans.

70. If you are have been identified as a district in need of assistance (SINA), doesn't that determine your professional development focus? Would you still need to develop your own plan?

Answer: SINA districts need to develop a professional development plan based around the specific needs that were a determining factor in their SINA identification. The primary focus of the professional development plan would center on those issues that each SINA school or school district would need to address locally. All SINA schools or school districts would not have the same professional development focus because the needs of their student populations will differ.

**CSIP Procedural Issues: Program Application for Funding
Public School Districts Only**

71. If a school district does not intend, for example, to apply for Title II, Part D Enhancing Education through Technology or Title IV Safe and Drug-Free funds, does it still need to write a goal in each of those areas?

Answer: No, a school district only has to meet the federal requirements for the programs for which it intends to access funds. (Remember that the CSIP is a partial program application for state and federal funds.)

72. How will a school district indicate to the Department which of the state and federal funding streams listed in CSIP Topic #22 it wishes to access for the 2004-05 school year?

Answer: The new five-year CSIP will be submitted through a new web-based program in the fall of 2004—for implementation beginning with the 2004-05 school year. Within that web-based program, each district will select the funding sources for which its CSIP is the partial program application. The school district disregards the requirements for programs/funds that it does not use.

73. In its CSIP, how will a district apply for funds that it intends to use flexibly through the Rural Education Achievement Program (REAP)? If we are a REAP School and REAP our Safe and Drug Free money does this change what we need to document in the CSIP regarding Safe and Drug Free money?

Answer: Directions for applying to REAP funds for the 2004-05 school year will be included in technical assistance provided with the web-based submission.

74. CSIP Topic #22 in the Rule/Statute interpretation Matrix (page 16) indicates that the CSIP will function as a partial application for Perkins funds. It is our understanding that Perkins funds will no longer be available after the 2003-04 school year. What is the status of Perkins funding for 2004-05 and for future years?

Answer: The Perkins Act is still up for reauthorization. With national and state school reform efforts focused on academic achievement, and with the fastest-growing occupations now requiring some postsecondary education, vocational education is seeking effective ways to contribute to these goals. As a result, it is timely to incorporate this program into the CSIP until such a time, if any, that it would not be appropriate to do so.

- 75. CSIP Topic #24 in the Rule/Statute interpretation Matrix (page 17) indicates that this portion of the application will describe the implementation of activities to improve special education. Will a description of the process our district uses to implement its special education program be sufficient?**

Answer: Yes, however, the rules interpretation information in the fourth column on page 17 suggests that evidence of the activities should be focused on district priorities: improving the performance of students with IEPs on district-wide assessments and progress with individual IEP goals which are aligned with local standards and benchmarks. The Westlake teaching document shows this evidence through its district career development plan focused on reading and mathematics (which includes the instruction of special education students) and participation in the district-wide professional development program by all special education teachers responsible for instruction.

CSIP Procedural Issues: Whole-Grade Sharing Districts

- 76. What are the CSIP requirements for school districts that whole-grade share?**

Answer: Each district in a whole-grade sharing agreement must meet all requirements of the CSIP applicable to the grade levels it houses. It is possible that whole-grade-sharing districts may use the same data, share curriculum, have the same long-range goals, etc. However, the CSIP of each whole-grade-sharing district should reflect data, goals, actions, student assessment, and program evaluation for the grade levels it houses.

- 77. If we whole grade share with a neighboring district can we write our goals together or have identical goals?**

Answer: No. Each whole-grade-sharing district's CSIP will reflect data around the learning of the students that it serves, who are different students for each district. However, a whole-grade-sharing "sending" district would certainly be interested in the achievement of its students received by another district—those data might be part of the sending district's needs assessment.

CSIP Procedural Issues: Other

- 78. I noticed some repeated requirement codes (i.e., two TQ9's and two TQ10's) in CSIP Constant Conversation Question #4. How will this be fixed?**

Answer: The Teacher Quality requirements on pages 21 and 22 in the Rule/Statute Interpretation Matrix will be revised to eliminate the duplication caused by electronic "pasting." The TQ requirements on pages 21 and 22 will simply be coded in numeric order as they appear (TQ9 through TQ 13). The regulatory guidance document will be updated on the web site and the corrections will be clearly identified in the technical assistance package for Constant Conversation #4: How will we evaluate our programs and services to ensure improved student learning?